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C/025/0005

From: Kurtis Sherwood <kurtsherwood@msn.com>
To: <daronhaddock@utah.gov>
Date: 5/17/2008 9:56 PM

Regarding: The proposed Alton Coal Mine (ref C/025/0005)

To Whom It May Concern,

As a land owner in both Kane County and Iron County I would like to express my grave concerns regarding the proposed Alton Coal Mine (ACM). This project should NOT be approved. This area of the country is yet unmarred by the impact of projects such as this one. If we allow projects such as the Alton Coal Mine to move forward, we will forfeit the great economic potential of this area.

The economic boom that this area recently experienced (and will again) was due to an influx of people interested in the beauty and tranquility of the area. They wish to come where the air is clean, the stars still shine, and to a place where they can still wander in and wonder at God's great works. These are both people who visit the National Park treasures of this country (spending their money along the way) and the folks who want to build a life and reside where families can still thrive without the overstimulation of modern times. Even in hard economic times such as these, we can enjoy the international economy that will take advantage of the low dollar to see the world renown beauty of the area. Once Southern Utah adopts the traits of the rest of citified/industrialized USA hometown, there will be nothing left to make it stand out.

My reasons to NOT approve the Alton Coal Mine include:

Coal and Mining Dust: Even with the current techniques and safeguards used by the giant mining companies who can afford the best of everything, those even miles away complain bitterly about the dust in the air that their children breath, that they have to clean from their houses every day, and that pollute the skies every day. Bryce Canyon National Park prides itself on its air quality and the wind will carry the ACM's dust right through the park. It will create another scar across the sky just as the power plant by Navajo Mountain does each day. Some of this dust will settle on the orange and white hues for which the park is famous for and take away from the grandeur and beauty of the park.

Water: The coal mine will require water to facilitate its processes. Where will that water come from? Water is already a critical concern to the communities in the area. What has been done to study where that water will pull from and how that will affect the existing rights. If water has been held in the ground in one area and that area is unnaturally tapped and released then water will run down to fill that area again. That water that "re-fills" those areas, where will it come from? Those who already have rights to water in the area need to be very concerned regarding the impact of ACM's operation and it's long term affects on their water supplies. Of what quality will the water be that runs from the mine? What will Kanab's children be drinking from? The Powell Pipeline is a joke. It will not save us. Lake Powell's water is already dangerously to the overuse point through all of its obligations to much larger populations.

· **Night Skies:** The affect of a 24 hour operation means light and that means light pollution at night. Mines are notorious for the huge arrays of light required for safety. This light will glare out the wondrous band of the milky way. I have visited 42 states and none have compared to the grandeur of this one. Again, the starry skies are one of the prides and attractions of this area. We will suffer if that too is eaten away.

· **Noise:** The noise of this mine (blasting, heavy equipment, trucks, etc.) will drive the wildlife from the area. This will include the famous hunting grounds of the Paunsaugunt Plateau. The hunters who take pride in this special draw district expressed their dismay about the potential of the area being mined during their Cedar City, Christmas gathering. For the same reasons these folks expressed their dismay at how it would affect their recreation in the land surrounding the area. Again, there are not many places in the country where the silence is so true. Something else that we will lose.

· **Endangered Species:** I know of a bald eagle that comes to the area each spring. In fact I have a photograph of it just a couple of miles from that area. What other endangered species habitats will be jeopardized?

· **The Miners:** Who are these guys? I understand that they are just a couple of guys who have been mining for years that decided to try it on their own. What are their credentials? Who has investigated their safety and ethics records? Who will be the geologist to guide them in their digging? What is their financing to back the project? I understand that one of their members already moved on? I already have a bad taste for their ethics by the map that was published regarding the mine. First it was published very quietly in less well known newspapers. Secondly, if they didn't have anything to hide or be concerned about, why not publish a map with the mine centered on the map. Instead they chose to place the map carefully askew. That act alone lets me know two things. One, that the mine is going to negatively impact us and they are trying to hide it from us. Two, that they will do what it takes to line their own pockets at the cost of the locals who want this to be a permanent home.

· **Restoration:** They claim that they will restore the land to its original condition. How are they going to recreate pink cliffs? How are they going to recreate God's work? Smooth rolling hills is not original condition. They will drastically change how the water flows and how vegetation will and won't grow. Thus they will change the habitats of all species there now. That is not original condition. In addition, mines commonly play tricks to avoid this. Mines will pretend to be open such as Ticaboo craftily avoiding this costly expense. Judging from the groundwork laid by the proposed mine organizers, they may well try this tactic as well—keeping on one or two employees as administrators/security to avoid the cost of finishing what they started.

· **Roads:** The trucks from the proposed mine will run night and day on twisting and winding roads, dark country roads. Police records indicate that accidents involving this type of vehicle are typically fatal. The weight of these trucks will excessively wear and tear the local roads. Who is going to pay for that excessive wear and tear? The pollution from the trucks will add another layer of filth and noise to the area. Who will pay for the costs suffered by folks who will be impacted by the trucks?

· **Lack of Jobs:** Some argue that the mine will bring jobs to the area. I've heard that it will bring only 50 jobs AND that the mine makes no promises to any of the locals. The proposed mine organizers were quoted as saying, "These are not pick and shovel jobs." That they will advertise extensively to hire the best qualified candidates and that the qualifications will include a high level of technical knowledge. Again, the locals will pay all the costs and reap very few benefits.

· **Land Value:** Land value does not increase around mining operations unless it is directly related to the mining. Property values in the surrounding area will go down or will accelerate at a definitively lower rate than non-mining areas. I've never heard anyone who is not a miner that is excited to move to or near a mining town.

· **National Concern:** The proposed mine is a national concern as it resides on National land. This

project should be advertised nationally to let all tax payers provide a response. I don't want to tell someone what to do in their own backyard, but this is the Nation's backyard.

Environmental Impact Study: A full and complete environmental impact study must be completed and published publically before this project is considered further.

People don't live here in this part of the country because it offers great money or because it's easy. Folks live here for the rich history, the family life, the beauty, the recreation, the freedom from pollutions of all types, and the tranquility. Keep the attractions of Utah intact, keep the families here, keep the business of tourism in the area flowing. Utah will never compete with the big business of the cities of the coasts. The infrastructure is simply not there and will cost too much to implement. But the infrastructure of beauty is already in place at no cost—we just have to not mess it up. We can all benefit by keeping this area the beauty destination that it is and enjoy the benefits of all the money all those folks want to spend visiting us.

I demand that a public hearing be held so that these issues can be further researched and discussed.

It would be a disastrous step in the wrong direction to approve the proposed Alton Coal Mine. Please do NOT approve the Alton Coal Mine project. It will line the pockets of a handful of people and cost the rest of us dearly.

Respectfully,

Kurt and Teresa Sherwood

Cedar City, UT

Give to a good cause with every e-mail. Join the i'm Initiative from Microsoft.
http://im.live.com/Messenger/IM/Join/Default.aspx?souce=EML_WL_GoodCause